

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Sioux Valley School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2001-2002**

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Dates of On Site Visit: November 5-6, 2002

Date of Report: November 18, 2002

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Staff Training Activities
- Surveys

- Staff Information
- Suspensions & Expulsions Data
- Statewide Assessment Information
- Enrollment Information Placement Information
- Disabling Conditions
- Exiting Information
- File Reviews
- Published Notifications

Meets requirements

Sioux Valley has established and effectively implements an on-going child find system. Sioux Valley School and North East Services Cooperative (NESC) locate and provide services for our birth through preschool students with special needs. Upon graduating, eligible students are served through Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Sioux Valley has a pre-referral system to follow prior to a child being referred. We also utilize the Teacher Assistance Team meeting prior to referral.

Sioux Valley does provide special education services for the Volga Christian School.

A report is submitted to the state annually regarding expulsions and suspensions.

Sioux Valley does employ appropriately licensed or certified personnel to work with students with disabilities. North East Services Cooperative also provides certified personnel to work with student with disabilities. Sioux Valley does appropriately offer personnel development to both teachers and teacher assistants. Sioux Valley staff offers parents opportunities to seek additional support services that may benefit.

Needs improvement

The district has not invited many parents to participate in teacher training activities. Staff should be given more of an opportunity to develop training opportunities.

Out of compliance

No evidence of any school activity to determine if the school district is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for General Supervision meets requirements.

Needs improvement

The district has not invited many parents to participate in teacher training activities.

The steering committee felt there was a need to invite parents to participate in teacher training activities. . The monitoring team did not validate this as an area needing improvement since staff indicated that parent training/awareness inservices have been provided. However, the district may proceed to develop improvement strategies to address this area of concern.

Staff should be given more of an opportunity to develop training opportunities.

The monitoring team did not validate this as an area needing improvement since interviews with several general and special education staff indicated they are given the opportunity to give input into trainings that are offered at the school and regional inservices. Again, the district may develop and implement improvement strategies for this area. Staff also indicated they are provided the opportunity to attend other inservices as needed.

Out of compliance

The steering committee felt there was no evidence of any school activity to determine if the school district is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators. The monitoring team did not validate this as out of compliance given the information that was provided by the guidance counselor and other staff members. Sioux Valley students have consistently maintained/increased stanine scores in most areas at 2nd, 4th, 8th and 11th grade, based on a four-year database. Each year the language arts scores have usually been either the lowest stanine or percentile rank received when compared to all the other tests. Information is used to determine appropriate curriculum & program needs. Results from state assessment are reviewed and presented to staff, parents and the public. Also, data to support that progress is being made towards the state performance goals and indicators is the graduation and zero drop out rate for the district. If district staff wish to develop and implement improvement strategies to gauge district efforts toward progress relative to performance goals and indicators, they are encouraged to do so.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education
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All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Staff Training Activities
- Surveys
- Staff Information
- Suspensions & Expulsions Data
- Enrollment Information
- Placement Information
- File Reviews
- Complaints
- Hearings
- Monitoring

Promising practice

No serious disciplinary actions were taken against students with special needs. Since there are no suspensions or expulsions, alternatives are being implemented.

Meets requirements

Sioux Valley does provide a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. To date, Sioux Valley has never removed a child with a disability from the school setting for more than ten cumulative days in a school year. When a child begins to accumulate days, North East Services Cooperative is notified to address potential disciplinary behavior concerns through a meeting with all concerned.

Needs improvement

Three parents indicated they were not offered extended school year (extended school year) services.
Two parents indicated that special equipment is not provided for doing schoolwork.

Validation Results

Promising practice

No serious disciplinary actions were taken against students with special needs.

Since there are no suspensions or expulsions, alternatives are being implemented.

Since there were no specific behavior programs identified by the district the monitoring team was unable to note this as a promising practice.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

Parents indicated they were not offered extended school term services.

In completing file reviews and in interviews the monitoring team could not find data that indicated extended school year was not provided when needed to students with special needs. District staff indicated they offer extended school year to all students on an IEP regardless of whether data is available or not to support the need for extended school year. Interviews with administration and special education staff indicate there is a need to improve staff's understanding of the primary elements used in determining the need for extended school year (i.e. regression/recoupment, emerging skills or maintenance of critical life skills) and how the IEP would document the need for extended school year (i.e. historical data, observation/charting and/or pre/post testing).

Parents indicated that special equipment is not provided for doing schoolwork.

The monitoring team did not validate this as an area needing improvement. In review of the parent surveys and staff interviews no concerns were verified that students were not provided special equipment for doing homework as noted on the IEP.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Staff Training Activities
- Surveys
- Exit & Retry Information
- Placements Overrides

- Disabling Conditions
- Staff Information
- Suspensions & Expulsions Data
- Enrollment Information
- Placement Information
- File Reviews
- Complaints
- Hearings
- Monitoring

Promising practice

Evaluations are not slanted towards any particular placement.
Staff does adjust individual curriculums in accordance with the test results.

Meets requirements

Sioux Valley Schools and North East Services Cooperative provide a knowledgeable team to conduct comprehensive evaluations. Parent input is provided through the Parent Report Forms and phone contacts. The district does implement valid and reliable evaluations.

Sioux Valley always provides appropriate written notices and obtains informed consent prior to initial assessments and reevaluations. Minimum requirements are being met by checking with NESC.

The team reviews all evaluations/reevaluations at the meeting and makes proper decisions based on the findings.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for appropriate evaluation concluded by the steering committee. The fact the district always provides evaluations that are not slanted towards any particular placement and that staff does adjust individual curriculums in accordance with test results was not verified as a promising practice by the review team since it is a requirement of the district, instead this is viewed as an area of maintenance for the district.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement for appropriate evaluation as concluded by the steering committee with the exception that all students are appropriately evaluated and reevaluated. See information under: Out of Compliance

Out of compliance

Issues requiring immediate attention

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation Procedures

A student file review completed by the team indicated that a reevaluation was completed in March 2002. The disabling condition reported on the child count was not substantiated by documentation within the file. The student's evaluation information did not support the eligibility criteria for autism. The evaluation results indicated low average-to-average fine motor, gross motor, adaptive behavior, language and academic skill. The district must reconvene this student's IEP committee and determine what if any additional evaluation data is needed to determine eligibility for special education or special education and related services.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Staff Training Activities
- Surveys
- Parental Rights Document
- Prior Notice/Consent
- Public Awareness Notice
- FERPA Statement
- Needs Assessment
- File Reviews
- Complaints
- Hearings

Meets requirements

Sioux Valley has provided an interpreter at meetings when it has been necessary.

The district does provide all parents with a copy of the parent rights form that informs them that they have the opportunity to inspect and review their child's records.

Parents are ensured the right to request an independent evaluation by offering them a copy of the parent rights form. Sioux Valley follows the comprehensive plan for NESC in response to complaint actions and requests for due process.

Needs improvement

Parents need information or training in transition activities. Instructional staff training specifically for transition activities needs to happen.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as meeting requirement for procedural safeguards conclude by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as needs improvement for procedural safeguards conclude by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Teacher Schedules
- Early Intervention
- Exit Information
- Surveys
- Monitoring
- File Reviews
- Complaints
- Hearings

Meets requirements

The district does invite all appropriate IEP team members. All IEPs contain the required content. The District does follow the state's practices and procedures to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible child.

Needs improvement

Work needs to be done to develop some/more activities with community-based organizations.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as meeting requirement for individual education program conclude by the steering committee

Needs improvement

The monitoring team did not validate the need to develop some/more activities with community-based organizations. Based on interviews with the family and consumer science teacher, secondary special education teacher and other staff members, students have the opportunity to be part of community-based organizations, and Project Skills is also arranged for students to provide community/job opportunities. However, the district is encouraged to develop improvement strategies for this area.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:12 Graduation

The IEP team is required to address graduation requirements one year prior to the student's graduation. The review team noted that 2 files did not have the required documentation for graduation completed one year prior to the student's graduation from a secondary program.

ARSD 24:05:30:16.01 Transfer of parental rights

The IEP team is required to address the transfer of rights to a student one year prior to turning eighteen. The review team noted in 5 of 8 files where the process should have occurred students were informed of the transfer within a shorter timeframe or no information regarding the transfer of rights was documented.

ARSD 24:05:27:13:02 Transition services

The IEP team is required to address a course of study for students age fourteen and up. The course of study is designed as a planning device to help ensure students achieve their desired outcomes for employment and independent living. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. In a review of 11 files 5 were missing the transition page or did not have transition information documented. Although a present level of performance was written for each student the district did not provide course study and/or a coordinated set of activities, which would promote movement from school to post-school activities.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment
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After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Budget Information
- District Handbooks
- Surveys
- Teacher Schedules
- Instructional Staff
- Enrollment Information
- Placement Information
- Disabling Conditions
- File Reviews
- Complaints
- Hearings
- Monitoring

Meets requirements

Sioux Valley School goes above and beyond to ensure the least restrictive environment is provided for all children with disabilities for successful participation. The regular classroom staff at Sioux Valley does an

exemplary job of including all students with special education as much as appropriate into the regular classroom setting.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas of maintenance for Appropriate Evaluation as conducted by the steering committee with the exception that all students are appropriately evaluated and reevaluated.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01 Requirements for individual education program

Each student's IEP must incorporate multidisciplinary evaluation information, which should include a justification for placement in other than the regular education program. The team found that justification for all students placed in a self-contained classroom have the same justification statement on their IEP. An interview with the classroom teacher indicated that a standard justification was written for students placed in her classroom.